

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

The Wonders of Light.

According to Dr. J. Gordon Ogden every cubic inch of this tremendous universe of ours is filled with the delicate tremulous pulsations known as light waves. Discussing some of the wonders of light, of which he gives a graphic picture, Dr. Ogden states that from æon to æon these quiverings have passed from world to world, from star to star, from galaxy to galaxy. Light that does not enter the eyes is, of course, invisible. Hence the blackness of a sky that is really filled with light—light that passes us by in its journey through space.

Modern Versus Old Violins.

At a trial recently made in Paris by a number of experts, it was shown that modern violins are as good, if not better, in sound than old ones. A number of instruments were numbered and played in a darkened room, the listeners not knowing the marks, but recording their verdict according to the numbers. When the final vote was taken it was found that the instrument having the largest number of votes was of Belgian manufacture, made last year, while the second was French, manufactured in 1911. A Stradivarius was voted as third best (although valued at thousands of pounds more than the modern violins, which took a greater number of votes), and a Grancino fourth, but the fifth and sixth were also of modern make.

At What Age is a Man Strongest?

It might be reasonably argued that since a man's muscles develop greatly with use, the older he grew the stronger he would become, but such is not the case. Not long ago experiments were made with some 800 men to show that the muscles of the average man go through their stages of successive increase and decline, and that whether he uses them much or little does not seem to make much difference. It was found that the average boy has a lifting power of 280 pounds. By his twentieth year, if his development is normal, his power should be increased so that he could easily exert a lifting power of 320, while his maximum power is generally reached in his thirtieth year, and is 365 pounds. After that it begins to decline, falling off eight pounds by the time he is forty. From forty to fifty the decrease is more rapid, the average lifting power at fifty being 330, only a little greater than at twenty. After fifty the decrease is so rapid and so varied that any accurate average is nearly impossible.

A Ditch-Digging Plant.

The United State Government has several millions of dollars invested in excavation and construction machinery along the forty-mile stretch of the Panama Canal. If expectations are realised the enterprise of connecting the two oceans by a cut across the neck of Panama will be completed before the expiration of another twelve months and the government will have in possession the most valuable and efficient outfit in the world for reducing land grades, building dams or embankments, and otherwise preparing transportation routes, whether by land or water. What is to become of this wonderful equipment? Will it be sent to the junk heap? A Bill is now under consideration by the Senate Committee on Territories which proposes the transfer when the Canal shall have been completed of a considerable portion of the working machinery at Panama to Alaska to be used in building a railroad from the coast to the coal mines. The suggestion was advanced some time ago that the Canal machinery should be transferred to the Atlantic Coast of the United States to be used in opening the proposed inner navigation route from Boston to Key West. More recently it has been suggested that the Panama outfit be used in the mammoth undertaking of building reservoirs and providing artificial embankments to protect the Central West from future floods.

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Intercolonial

The Rev. J. P. Bartley, O.F.M., was ordained priest on Sunday, June 29, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, by his Grace the Coadjutor-Archbishop (Most Rev. Dr. Mannix), at the 11 o'clock Mass in St. Mary's Church, Star of the Sea, West Melbourne.

A fine, imposing and commodious new primary school for the girls of St. Mary's parish, St. Kilda East, was blessed and opened on Sunday, June 15, by his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne. The occasional sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Hunt, C.S.S.R. (Superior of the Redemptorist Fathers), and the Archbishop afterwards delivered an address on the importance of the Catholic school.

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Catholic church in Horsham (Ballarat) was performed on Sunday, June 15, by his Lordship Dr. Higgins. There was a large gathering of the parishioners, as well as many representatives of the other denominations. At the conclusion of the address by the Bishop, Rev. Father Meade, pastor of the district, read out a list of subscriptions, which, including amounts previously subscribed, amounted to nearly £3000. The building, which is to cost £3500, will seat 400 persons in the church proper.

The celebration of the golden jubilee of the Rev. Mother Gertrude Sheehy (Superioress-General of the Sisters of Mercy, Bathurst) was the occasion of an enthusiastic demonstration in Bathurst on June 10. The religious part of the day's celebration took place at SS. Michael and John's Cathedral, where Mass was celebrated by his Lordship Bishop Dunne, who invested the Rev. Mother Gertrude with a white floral crown and pastoral staff festooned with white roses, to mark the occasion of her jubilee. The procession into the Cathedral was headed by fifty little girls (symbolical of the Rev. Mother Gertrude's fifty years in religion), clad in white and wearing white veils. Then followed about 100 Sisters of Mercy, representing all the convents of the diocese. Rev. Mother Gertrude, daughter of Edward and Mary Anne de Courcy Sheehy, was born at Springmount House, Rathkeale, Limerick, in 1842. She was educated by the Sisters of Mercy, Limerick, and entered the Convent of Mercy, Charleville, Cork, in her eighteenth year. Three years later she was professed, and when Bishop Quinn, of Bathurst, solicited the Superioress of Charleville Convent for a community for his diocese, Sister Mary Gertrude was one of those who volunteered for service in Australia.

The golden jubilee of the ordination to the priesthood of the Very Rev. Dean Nelan, of Colac, was celebrated with great enthusiasm on June 18. Among those present were his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, his Grace the Coadjutor Archbishop (Most Rev. Dr. Mannix), his Lordship the Bishop of Sale, his Lordship the Bishop of Ballarat, and a large number of clergy. The jubilarian was the recipient of substantial proofs of the respect in which he is held by all classes. At a banquet congratulatory speeches were made by the prelates, clergy, and public men. Amongst the tributes which the venerable Dean received on his jubilee anniversary—and they were many and varied—none was more remarkable (says the *Advocate*) than that which his Protestant friends offered him; and nothing could be more remarkable than the form which the tribute took. It is a regrettable fact that the evidences of vitality which the Church affords by reason of the ever-expanding growth of church buildings, schools, and convents are a cause of offence to the lesser minds amongst Protestants, who look upon them as a proof of the 'aggressions of Rome.' Yet when this group of Protestant citizens bethought themselves of joining in the jubilee celebrations they could think of no better way than presenting the Dean with a framed photograph of himself surrounded by some of the nobler buildings which had been erected through his instrumentality.

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